

**Thursday 19 January 2023**

### **A message from Bishop Martin and Bishop Mike**

Bishop Martin and Bishop Mike have written to all clergy, churchwardens and ministers following the announcement of plans for same-sex couples to be able to come to church to give thanks for their civil marriage or civil partnership and receive God's blessing. Details of the announcement can be found [here](#).

Responding to the announcement Bishop Martin said, *"The first thing that Mike and I wish to say is that we are grateful that the bishops of the Church of England have agreed to make a public apology for the way members of the LGBTQI+ community have been treated by the church. The bishops stressed the importance of all our congregations offering an unreserved and joyful welcome to same-sex couples. We, as your bishops, want to underline this message. Secondly, we welcome the prayers and other resources, Prayers of Love and Faith, that are proposed to be commended by the House of Bishops for services for same-sex couples in church. These include prayers of thanksgiving, dedication and blessing."*

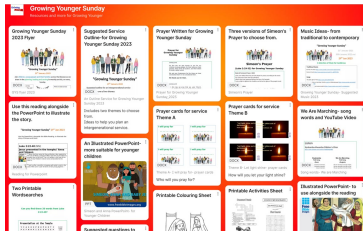
The proposals, which follow a six-year period of listening, learning and discernment known as Living in Love and Faith, will be outlined in a report to the Church's General Synod, which meets in London next month.

Bishop Martin and Bishop Mike added, *"While we welcome these developments, which are important, you will not be surprised to hear that we are both disappointed that they do not go further. Through this process we have both reached the view that the faithful, pastoral, loving and just way forward is to extend Holy Matrimony to same-sex couples. We recognise that many of you agree with us, while many of you would not be able to support such a change and many remain uncertain. This reflects the situation amongst the bishops where there is deep disagreement held in tension with a commitment to moving forward together."*

The first step is for General Synod to consider these proposals in February. The bishops will listen to and reflect on the response from the General Synod and will then refine the prayers before they are commended for use. Full details including the bishops' paper, prayers and background information will be published on Friday 20 January.

+Mark +Mike

## Growing Younger Sunday - 29 January 2023



Growing Younger Sunday aims to embed growing younger (0-25 year olds) in the diocese by viewing everything through the lens of children and young people and providing ideas, information and support to areas or groups that seek it, to support their long-term success and development of discipleship.

The Growing Younger team is led by [Matt Levett](#), Youth and Young Adults Officer, and [Hilary Wordsworth-Sewell](#), Diocesan Children's and Families' Enabler, both of whom provide events and opportunities for young people and children to connect with church.

**Growing Younger Sunday resources are now on our website [here](#).**

## Box River Benefice is Growing Younger



The Revd Rob Parker McGee from the Box River Benefice has been running an after-school choir club at the local Boxford CofE Primary School since 2021. The choir has sung for key festivals including Easter and Christmas. By Christmas 2022 the choir had grown to 30 pupils strong from years 2 – 6, who met for five weeks of practice and sang *Away in a Manger* and *Taizé Magnificat* at the school festivities. 22 of the children then sang at Boxford's Advent Carols and Christingle service in church

to close the annual Christmas Tree Festival and Fayre, with 160 people in attendance.

Rob plans to continue the choir in 2023, Rob says: *"I visit the school once a week to take school assemblies and I am vice-chair on the governing body. Over the last four years we have worked tremendously hard to re-develop the relationship between the church and the school so that the school feels that the church is home"*. Growing Younger and creating links between the school and church has been part of the benefice action plan, as is developing relationships with other community groups around the benefice. To read more on this story please visit our [website here](#).

## All Saints, Mendham has earned the Silver Eco-church status!



All Saints, Mendham has gained Silver Eco-church status, one of only 20 parishes within the diocese. In order to gain this award lots of improvements were made, including but not limited to: installing a cycle rack, creating careful and sustainable plans for rare grasses in churchyard, calculating the church carbon footprint and securing 100% green electricity. The church is already working towards the coveted Gold status, so watch this space!

The A Rocha Eco-church scheme is designed to motivate and resource churches in establishing caring for God's earth as an integral part of their everyday work and witness. It aims to create a vast network of churches as local centres of creation care in the community – shining beacons of hope for a brighter environmental future. If you would like to know what you would need to do to gain Eco-Church status please visit our website [here](#).

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## Ronald Blythe

We are saddened to hear about the death of Ronald Blythe last Saturday. Ronald was a Lay Canon Emeritus at St Edmundsbury Cathedral and a celebrated Suffolk author. Ronald was regarded as one of the finest contemporary writers on the English countryside and in 2022 released a book, *Next to Nature: A Lifetime in the English Countryside*, to celebrate his 100th birthday. Dean Joe reflected on the fact that *Akenfield*, as one of his set texts at school, gave access to a range of voices from a rural landscape already moving into the past. The authenticity of Mr Blyth's voice, as well as his attentive listening as a writer, ensured that the enduring beauty of Suffolk and the tenacity of its people are immortalised forever through his prose.

Bishop Martin shares some words on his passing: *"Ronald Blythe, who died on Saturday aged 100, touched the hearts and imagination of people here in Suffolk and around the world through his extraordinary evocative writing. We are all saddened by his death, and thankful for all he has given us. I think my first encounter with Suffolk was reading Akenfield as a student, and that surely kindled for me my love of this county. Ronald continued to write and many of us looked forward each week to read his weekly column in the Church Times, Word from Wormingford, to savour life and the passing of the seasons. Ronald was a faithful Reader and had served as a Lay Canon of the Cathedral. He will be greatly missed, but his writing will continue to inspire and delight us."*

Details of a memorial service will be announced by St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

## Events

### **Candlelit Epiphany Procession**

Sunday 21 January, 3.30pm to 4.15pm

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP1 1LS

All are warmly invited to the Cathedral for the annual Candlelit Epiphany Procession, which includes readings and carols celebrating the 'three signs' which mark Jesus as Saviour for all peoples of the world.

### **Re-Crown him with many crowns**

Saturday 21 January, from 6.45pm

St John's Church, Cauldwell Hall Road, Ipswich IP4 4QE

In partnership with Together For Ipswich, Ipswich In Prayer is calling **all** the Ipswich churches at the start of 2023 to be Centred on Christ, Celebrating Christ's presence and

activity and Sent in Christ's name by the Spirit. Join at 6.45pm to visit and pray at stands covering some of the Christian work in Ipswich, at 7.30pm attend the main meeting including worship led by Cantus Firmus, prayer and a talk by Jerry Brown. For more information please visit: [Ipswich in Prayer](#)

### **PCC Workshop - Parish Banking**

24 January, 10.00am - 11.00am, Zoom

We would like to help our volunteers in parishes to feel more connected and supported by the diocese, and so invite you to join us for a series of topic-based Zoom meetings facilitated by diocesan staff. These will be available to PCCs, treasurers, churchwardens, administrators and clergy. Diocesan staff and parish 'experts' will share information and knowledge in these sessions in the format of a short presentation or Q&A format, both followed by your questions. If you have any questions or do not receive the Zoom link before the meeting, please contact [julie.podd@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:julie.podd@cofesuffolk.org). To book your place please [click here](#).

### **PCC Workshop - Church Buildings**

Tuesday 24 January, 7.30pm, Zoom

Edmund Harris has recently been appointed as the Secretary of the DAC having previously worked for the dioceses of Canterbury and London, as a Churches Conservation Adviser at The Victorian Society and as a heritage consultant. Edmund is passionate about historic buildings and spends much of his spare time writing about Victorian architects and architecture in his blog *Less Eminent Victorians*, and taking photographs for his Instagram account @buildings.and.places.

Edmund will give a presentation on faculties, the DAC and church buildings in general. There will be ample time for questions on all DAC-related matters at the end of the evening. Please sign up [here](#).

### **Holocaust Memorial Day Service 2023**

Friday 27 January, 10.30am

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP1 1LS

St Edmundsbury Cathedral will hold a special service for Holocaust Memorial Day to remember the victims of genocide. The service will take place in the Peace Garden in the Abbey Gardens, and the theme is *Ordinary People*. Ordinary people were perpetrators, bystanders, rescuers, witnesses - and ordinary people were victims. Joining the Cathedral for the service will be local schools Guildhall Feoffment and County High School who will contribute readings and music. As well as the special service at 10.30am, the Cathedral will be open throughout the day with areas set aside for reflection and contemplation.

### **Comedy Evening with hte Revd Ravi Holy**

Tuesday 31 January, 7.00-8.00pm

Free Online event organised by Bridge Church, Ipswich

Ravi Holy is both a stand up comedian and an Anglican vicar. He has appeared on the One Show as well as the Hunter Club in Bury St Edmunds. His act comprises of telling his own life story through humour. He provokes laughter as well as some serious thought. As part of the evening there will be opportunity for Q&A. So, blow any January blues away by

signing up on [Eventbrite here](#) to access the Zoom details.

## Tumbling into Light - Candlemas Celebration

Sunday 5 February 5.30pm

St Mary's Church, Woodbridge IP12 4LP

Choir, Instrumentalists and Friends present a special Candlemas celebration in word, music and song with St Edmundsbury Cathedral's InHarmony project. Music led by Richard Hubbard and Sarah Dodds.

## Engaging All Ages in Worship workshop and service

19 February 2023

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP1 1LS

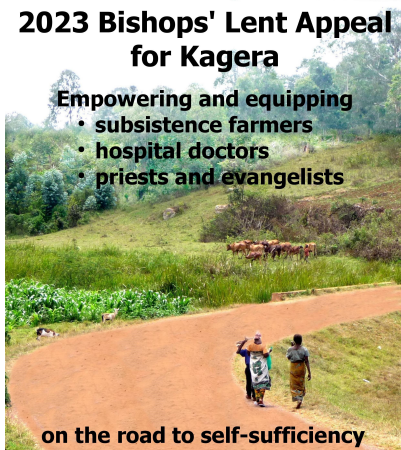


Join the Engaging All Ages in Worship workshop from InHarmony. The workshop with Sara and Sam Hargreaves runs from 2.00pm - 4.00pm and is open to any adults or teens involved or interested in leading services and worship for a range of ages. Explore how you can include a range of ages, spiritual styles, learning modes and all the senses in gathered worship. Followed

by an hour worship service at 4.30pm, ideal for families, putting into practice ideas from the workshop. Tickets cost £10 - CMD grants are applicable to those who are eligible. Find out more: <https://stedscathedral.org/events/engaging-all-ages-in-worship>

## 2023 Bishops' Lent Appeal for Kagera

Starting 22 February 2023



For more information or to donate visit [cofesuffolk.org/bishops-lent-appeal](https://cofesuffolk.org/bishops-lent-appeal)



During Lent 2023 we are asking you and your churches to join our Bishops' Lent Appeal for Kagera. We realise that in many churches throughout our diocese wonderful work is being done to support local communities in the very difficult cost of living crisis. Through food banks, warm spaces and many more creative ways you are truly loving your neighbours. And our global neighbours need our support too. In Kagera the cost of staples like maize, beans and cooking oil has doubled in the past year. And of course these price rises come on top of the impact of the climate crisis.

Churches across Kagera work hard to empower communities to seek their own solutions to problems. In Lent 2023 the theme of our Appeal is 'Empowering and equipping farmers, doctors, priests and evangelists on the road to self-sufficiency'.

If you want to know more or to hear about how the money from the last appeal was used, invite a speaker to your church or group. Contact Chris and Anji Dawkins at [kagera@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:kagera@cofesuffolk.org). To access all of our resources and to donate [please click here](#).

## Promises and Prophecies: Mary in Art

Saturday 25 February, 10.30am (start coffee/tea for talk at 11.00am).  
Museum Street Methodist Church, Ipswich IP1 2EF (Entrance in Elm Street).

Join this workshop for an illustrated exploration of Our Lady in the visual arts by Fleur Dorrell. This is a free event but there is an opportunity to donate.

### **Journeys - Lent course offered by The Clewer Initiative**

The Clewer Initiative is producing a new resource for Lent 2023 which will be available to download from their [website](#) in early January. 'Journeys' will be based on the 'Stations of the Cross' and through five mini films and an accompanying devotional resource, it will take churches and individuals on a journey, challenging them to take action against modern slavery and not be a bystander. It can be used in in-person small groups, individual study or online. The films will include interviews with church members, experts and community leaders who have done significant anti-slavery work. They will highlight the journeys that they have been on to deliver their work. Sign up [here](#).

### **Preaching Matthew, with Professor George van Kooten**

Saturday 25 February 9.30am to 12.30pm  
Salvation Army Hall, Violet Hill Road, Stowmarket IP14 1NE

Bishop Martin invites you to a follow-up of the November 2022 study morning 'Preaching on the Gospel of Matthew'. This session includes guest speaker Professor George van Kooten from the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. To book your place please visit here: [Bishops-preaching-Matthew-2023.eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bishops-preaching-matthew-2023). Please note the other Bishops' study morning dates in 2023 are 17 June and 25 November.

### **Church Army Discovery Events**

Monday 27 February 7.00pm - 9.30pm, Online  
Saturday 25 March 10.00am - 3.00pm, in person

Do you have a passion for seeing people come to know Christ? Are you exploring vocations or wanting to find a network of like-minded people? Are you unsure where you fit? How about considering Church Army? Book a place please [click the link here](#) or contact [Andrew Payne](#).

### **Living your life with God**

Starting 28 February 2023, 7.00pm - 8.30pm  
Zoom Lent course

Brother Lawrence wrote about how he lived his Christian life in the 1600s and his very slim work "Practicing the Presence of God" has been massively popular ever since. Through Lent, Bishop Mike (and an occasional guest!) will be offering five Zoom sessions looking at how his insights can be applied in everyday life, with plenty of room for discussion on the way. For more details and to book your place [please click here](#).

### **BIG Weekend**

Friday 14 April 2023, 6.00pm – Sunday 16 April 4.00pm  
Sizewell Hall, Sizewell, Leiston IP16 4TX

Matt Levett, Diocesan Youth & Young Adults Officer, invites you to the BIG Weekend. Organised by a team of experienced youth workers it offers young people the opportunity to come together and make new friends. Ask members of your youth group if they would like to come along. The age range is from school years 7-13. Whilst it is Christian in ethos and focus you don't have to call yourself a Christian to be able to attend and have fun! To find out more and to sign up [please click here](#).

### Icon Workshop Retreat

Monday to Friday 8 - 12 May, 9.00am-5.00pm

St Mary and St Botolph Church, Whitton, Ipswich

Would you like to try writing an Icon? Even if you have no artistic experience, ability or talent, learn to write an Icon under the expert guidance of Annette Lawrence DMJ. It is a way of prayer and especially helpful at times when prayer is not easy. You will also learn about the technique, theology and meaning found in Icons as well as the spirituality of the iconographer. There will be talks and the regular round of corporate prayer and Eucharist as well as meditations on Icons. All equipment will be provided. The cost of the workshop will be £150. Clergy and LLMs may be able to use their CMD grants for this. You can expect to spend approx. £20-£25 on pigments and brushes during the retreat depending on what you need, which you keep and so can use on an ongoing basis. The Gesso board will be £5. If you have any questions please email the Revd [Mary Sokanovic](#) or download an application form [here](#).

### Improve your Church's Finances - save the date!

Saturday 10 June, 9.30am - 3.30pm

St Augustine's Church, Ipswich IP3 8TH



Improve your church's finances with an informative day conference for Clergy, PCCs and church members. Save the date, more information will follow.

## Notices

### Message from Gary Peverley, Deputy Diocesan Secretary and Finance Director, on Parish Share end of year payments:

Thank you to all of our parishes for your giving towards parish share. We would like to remind you that we continue to accept payments towards the 2022 parish share **up to and including Tuesday 31 January 2023. Payments received after that date, unless we know about them in advance, will be treated as 2023 parish share.** This is to enable us to move quickly to close our own accounts and prepare for our statutory audit. We understand that, for some parishes, it can take time to work through

final parish share payments for the year just ending, but would appreciate it if we could all work to the timetable above and understand the cut-off dates.

Our preference is to receive funds via online banking (but please ensure you make clear which year the payment is for in the text field).

Any cheques must be received at the office by 31 January 2023 to be included in your 2022 Parish Share figures. Cheques received after this date will only be accounted for in your 2022 figures if you have told us by 31 January to expect the cheque so that we can accrue for it, allowing us to finalise our own accounts.

**Statistics for Mission:** Thank you to all parishes who have already submitted their Statistics for Mission forms. The national church deadline is 31 January 2023. Returns are to be submitted on the [Online Parish Returns System](#), if you require login details or any other assistance regarding the online portal please contact Alison Barker by [email](#). Further information is available on our website [here](#).

**Do you want to play an important role in clergy appointments?** The Diocesan Board of Patronage plays an important role in appointing clergy. Where there is no patron for the benefice, the board will act as the patron and can support the vital process of selecting a new incumbent. We need four lay members and one ordained member of the Board for it to be fully constituted. These are elected positions open to anyone on a parish electoral roll, and elections will take place later this year. If you are interested and would like to discuss this opportunity please email either [Gavin Bultitude](#), Diocesan Secretary or [Charlotte Hodgson](#), Governance Manager.

## Vacancies

[Giving Advisor, Parish Resources Team \(Giving\), Full-time or part-time](#) | Closing date: 23 January

[Giving Advisor, Parish Resources Team \(Grants\) Full-time or part-time](#) | Closing date: 23 January

[Vicar | Needham Market with Badley](#) | Closing date: 30 January 2023

[Priest in Charge | Orebeck Benefice](#) | Closing date: 31 January 2023

[Rector, Benefice of Rattlesden, Brettenham, Hitcham and Thorpe Morieux](#) | Closing date: 3 February 2023

[Sales Assistant | St Eds Cathedral](#) | Closing date: 8 February 2023

[Rector | Claydon and Barham, Great Blakenham and Henley](#) | Closing date: 28 February 2023

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